

Chester Theatre Company, Chester,, MA  
*The Light* by Loy A. Webb. Directed by Christina Franklin.

Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman

**“So many ‘whys’ ”**

When the light comes on in Genesis’s mind, the drama supercedes the comedy of her life which was not her goal, her need, or her desire. She aimed her anniversary gifts toward the joy of her situation and not toward the tragedy, but her boyfriend’s wish to please her while pleasing himself has set her on a different course. Rashad has simple wishes: sensual pleasure, marriage, family. Simple. Genesis wants absolution for wrongs committed against her. This couple in their conflict are seemingly irreconcilable.



Kala Ross, Kayodè Soyemi. Photo: Andrew Greto

Rashad is played by Kayodè Soyemi in this production at Chester Theatre. He has a natural charm that lights up the stage. He is handsome, graceful, well-built and speaks with a voice that illuminates thought. Rashad is a fireman, totally blue-collar, but his background gives him a white collar edge; he is the father of a young daughter who is spoken about by both of the couple. He adores her and sees Genesis as an excellent new mother for her. She is a teacher who loves her work but doesn’t care to extend it to her boyfriend even though she understands that there are things he doesn’t know and doesn’t understand. One of his anniversary gifts sets her teeth on edge and ultimately her secrets are revealed and the anxiety they provoke threaten to end their love relationship.

Genesis is played by Kala Ross who is lovely in the role. It is easy to see what attracts Rashad to her: beauty, intelligence, grace and style. Ross brings all of this to her character and more; she has the talent to maneuver through the comedy and manage the drama of Genesis's situation without making it preachy or discouraging. Ross has a voice that compels you to listen to her and when she moves from anger to hysteria there is no option other than to move with her. She never overplays the emotions of the moment but keeps it very real and very compelling.

The play itself, one-act, 87 minutes long, is so well written that any alternatives for the two characters appear to be inconceivable. Their drama must be played out as written; it is too specific a set of problems. Loy A. Webb has crafted a play that needs to be seen for it reflects on all lovers of every race anywhere. They could be you; they could be me. That makes the play all the more important.

Christina Franklin has done a masterful job staging the piece. Both characters move almost constantly, their nervousness about all of their situations compels them. Genesis's apartment is big enough to accommodate the couple and their intentions, positive and negative, in addition to very useful furniture and decorations, designed by Suzu Sakai. The costumes designed by director Christina Franklin help define both people and Lara Dubin's delicate lighting keeps the show alive in its severest instances. Kelsey Rainwater has provided intimacy assistance and the sound designer, James McNamara, has provided atmospheric music that works for the play.

I like this play. I like the people in it. I like the fact that this second production I've seen in the past year never felt stale or old but was constantly self-refreshing. Chester has come up with a perfect production of a problem play worth seeing. See it.

+ 07/38/2023 +

**The Light** plays at Chester Theater in the Chester Town Hall Theater through August 6. For information and tickets go to [www.chestertheatre.org](http://www.chestertheatre.org) or call 413-354-7771.



Kayodè Soyemi, Kala Ross;  
Photo: Andrew Greto